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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2002

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Military advises support for air operations alone - Milliyet
Turkey transit passage for U.S. troops - Hurriyet
Amb. Pearson urges Gul, Erdogan to decide on Iraq - Milliyet
12/22
Gen. Myers: U.S. ready for Iraq war - Aksam 12/22
Erdogan to discuss Iraq w/Putin - Turkiye
Russia denounces KADEK before Erdogan's visit -- Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Tough week for parliament - Radikal
Turkey is key country in U.S. Iraq plans - Radikal
U.S. presses for air bases - Radikal 12/22
U.S. demands immediate response regarding Iraq - Cumhuriyet
12/22
State minister Tuzmen: Muslim world against Iraq war - Yeni
Safak
AKP planning post-Saddam Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Baykal: Government must inform nation on Iraq - Zaman 12/22
Weston: Compromise before late February - Zaman

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Government, NGO summit on Wednesday - Dunya
Government seeking trade rapprochement w/Moslem countries -
Dunya
Election honeymoon over in money markets - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: Today's papers report that the Turkish government will respond this week to U.S. demands for military cooperation against Iraq. Monday's "Milliyet" claims that the military has advised the government to provide support for air operations, but to refrain from promises on ground troops. Ankara is also negative about the use of Turkish ports, Milliyet reports. However, the government has accepted air base inspections in Batman, Diyarbakir, Mus, and Malatya. Ankara wants a wider coalition against Saddam Hussein, and believes that Muslim countries must be convinced to join the U.S. and UK in their efforts to topple the tyrant, weekend papers note. Sunday's dailies report that U.S. Ambassador to Ankara Robert Pearson has urged Prime Minister Abdullah Gul to decide in the coming days about U.S. military requests. After meeting with Ambassador Pearson on Saturday, Prime Minister Gul said Ankara would wait to see the first report by UN weapons inspectors. Ankara, skeptical of U.S. intentions in Northern Iraq, is not enthusiastic about large numbers of U.S. troops being stationed in Turkey, Monday's papers say. A final 'summit' meeting will be held this evening, including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Chief of TGS. The 'summit' will lay the groundwork for a government decision to be submitted to parliament for approval this week. Monday's "Cumhuriyet" outlines U.S. demands from Turkey:

-- the use of air bases in Batman, Incirlik, Malatya,
Diyarbakir, and Afyon;
-- access to ports in Mersin, Iskenderun, Samsun, and
Trabzon;
-- an estimated 100,000 U.S. troops to be deployed in
Turkey, subject to NATO regulations,
-- missile defense systems will to be set up in Turkey.

Cumhuriyet also draws attention to forthcoming visits to Turkey by Iraqi opposition leaders Sharif Ali Bin Hussein and Ayad Allawi, and Northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani this week. The paper regards these meetings as part of Turkey's preparation for the post-Saddam period.

Cyprus: Monday's "Zaman" reports that U.S. Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas Weston urged the sides in Cyprus to reach a compromise before the end of February. Weston said there was enough time for a settlement, and urged both parties to make compromises. Weston said that the decision reached at the Copenhagen summit -- unconditional EU membership for Cyprus, and a date to begin membership negotiations for Turkey -- was positive. A "Radikal" commentary suspects that Ankara is inclined to delay implementation of a possible Cyprus deal until Turkey's EU accession is assured. Radikal says that Ankara is trying to blackmail the EU via Cyprus.

Constitutional amendments: The parliament is to discuss this week the constitutional package vetoed by President Sezer. The government is expected to send back the package to Sezer without changes on Friday, papers report. A press amnesty bill drafted to lift the ban on AKP leader Erdogan will be enacted this week. The former leader of the pro-Kurdish party HADEP, Murat Bozlak, voiced support for Sezer's veto. Bozlak, who was also barred from running for election to parliament, said that the changes were tailored for Erdogan alone. Bozlak, (the former Human Rights Association chairman) Akin Birdal, and (banned Islamist leader) Erbakan have received prison terms of one year for violating Article 312, while Erdogan was sentenced to ten months. The Constitutional liberalization would not have applied to those sentenced to at least one year of prison. "The Constitution must be amended to remove bans on all politicians, not only on Erdogan," Bozlak reportedly said.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"Listen to what the US military has to say"
Washington correspondent of mass appeal Milliyet, Yasemin Congar wrote: (12/23): "Contrary to ongoing speculation about the start of a US military strike as early as February, members of the American military tell it differently. Their assessment that an operation would take place either sometime next summer or toward the end of 2003. . The reason for their uncommon evaluation stems from military facts. The military knows that in the event of an extensive war -- the figure in the press is some 200,000 troops -- detailed preparations will require at least 4 to 6 months. . My military sources in Washington who are familiar with the capabilities and logistics of the US army remind that the military build-up during the Gulf War was carried out via aircraft carriers. That brings us to three countries which have ports with ground access to Iraq: Turkey, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis are reluctant to cooperate, and Kuwait's port capacity is very limited. This is the reason for Washington's gradually increasing pressure on Turkey."

"The pretext for US military deployment: Deterrence"
Zeynep Gurcanli wrote in tabloid Star (12/23): "Washington has finally come up with a pretext in order to break Ankara's reluctance about the stationing of US troops in Turkey. The use of bases and ports by the US military will be presented under the pretext of 'modernization,' and the deployment of US troops on Turkish soil will be a 'show of force for deterrence.' . From now on, we should be ready to see a dramatic increase in the US military presence in Turkey. First, US special operations teams are expected. These will be followed by many others. . Turkey has not yet given its approval to be a host country for US military operations against Iraq. The inclusion of NATO as part of the operation seems to be a possible way to break Ankara's resistance on the issue. . War is knocking at the door. It is only a matter of time before all the pretexts are worked out."

PEARSON